

**COMMISSION ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES**

401 Hungerford Drive  
Tan Conference Room, 1st Floor  
Rockville, Maryland  
October 27, 2011

<b>COA Members</b>	<b>Members Absent - continued</b>
Alicia Bazan-Jimenez	Leslie Marks
Elaine Kotell Binder	Robert (Bob) Tiller
Elizabeth Brooke-Evens	
Morton A. Davis	<b>Liaisons</b>
Paul DelPonte	Austin Heyman, Office of Community Partnerships
Tammy Duell	Sam Korper, Commission on Health
John Honig	Seth Morgan, Commission on People with Disabilities
Charles (Chuck) S. Kauffman	Mildred Nance, MC Public Libraries
Miriam Kelty	Phil Smakula – Recreation Department
Kenneth (Ken) Montgomery	
Barbara Mulitz	<b>Guests</b>
Nhora Murphy	Bruce Adams, Office of Community Partnerships
Mona Negm	Carmen Delgado Uatan, LAACo
Rudolph (Rudy) Oswald	Irwin Goldbloom
Joseph Petrizzo	Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Marcia Pruzan	Pat Lesnick, Committee of Ethnic Affairs (CEA)
Spencer Schron	Henry Montes, Rockville CoA
Beth Shapiro	Laurie Pantezzi
John (Jack) Sprague	Karla Silvestre, Office of Community Partnerships
Judith Welles	Fernando Torres-Gil, Ph.D., UCLA Sch. of Public Affairs
Grace Whipple	
	<b>Staff</b>
<b>Members Absent</b>	John (Jay) Kenney, Ex. Committee
Myrna Cooperstein	Odile Saddi
Vivien Hsueh	Sharon Briggs
Judith Levy	

Commission on Aging (COA) Chair, Elaine Binder, opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. She thanked Mona Negm for inviting our guest speaker, Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil and introduced Montgomery County Executive, Isiah Leggett.

Mr. Leggett noted that years ago he had served as a White House Fellow. He was one of 12-15 professionals selected across the country each year who are selected for the honor of working with the Cabinet, President, and Vice President. It was there that he first met today's guest, Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil, a friend of more than 34 years.

In addition to having been a White House Fellow, President Carter appointed him as a member of the Federal Council on Aging. More recently, President Obama appointed Dr. Torres-Gil as Vice Counselor on Disability in an effort to bring senior groups and disability contingencies closer together to work on

important issues, such as long-term care, which will be affecting these groups as well as the growing number of Americans turning 65. Mr. Leggett noted that Dr. Torres-Gil brings passion, intellect, and genuine concern to his work in areas of diversity, local government, national government, aging, disability, health management, or human services.

**Guest Speaker** – Fernando Torres-Gil, Ph.D. – Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Professor of Social Welfare and Public Policy; Director, Center for Policy Research and Aging, UCLA School of Public Affairs

Dr. Torres-Gil also thanked Mona for inviting him and for her long friendship. He noted that he has met and/or worked with about half of the COA members in their various fields.

Dr. Torres-Gil commended the Montgomery County Executive for having the foresight to understand the dramatic demographic changes of the County. The County is at ground zero for demographic transformation in Maryland. According to the 2010 Census, by 2050 the United States will become a majority/minority country. By 2042 the Hispanics will be the largest minority group in the United States.

This type of dramatic change can be challenging. We can learn lessons from the experiences of Los Angeles, which already has faced many of these challenges.

The first requirement for adjusting to change is to honestly face the fears that change can elicit in many of us and begin planning for it. For example, this would be a good time for a Human Rights Commission to begin holding discussions about the changing diversity in this community.

The second lesson Los Angeles learned over the years is that changes are good. Los Angeles has avoided economic decline that other cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Detroit, and the Mid-West experienced during these changes. The Los Angeles population that existed in earlier years is now being replenished by Mexican immigrants (legal or illegal), Armenians, Persians, Japanese, Koreans, etc. These groups move into neighborhoods where the older white population lived formerly; they rebuild, reinvest, and open businesses. This is good for the city. The basic fundamental values of this country—hard work, ambition, patriotism, family, and church—are most embodied in these diverse immigrant populations. They come with the ideal of wanting to give their children a better future, and wanting to be an American.

Another lesson is that language barriers must be addressed. It is important to invest in English language classes for immigrant populations. For example, in Monterrey Park, CA, and other communities, there Whites and Hispanics protested about Cantonese and Mandarin replacing English and Spanish language signs when Asians began moving in. Public services signs there now have up to five languages. Keep in mind, however, that all immigrant groups eventually learn English; multiple language signs are a way to buy time for that to happen.

Another issue is the development of culturally competent services, especially for older immigrants who will not have the same opportunity to assimilate as the young. Schools, social work, health sciences, programs in sociology can be very helpful. Competent services will ensure a workforce that can speak the language as well as service providers and a community that understands the traditions, values, customs, and the history of the individual who has come to this country.

Tension can arise when some people feel they are losing out when new immigrant minority groups arrive. Issues related to land use, restricted zoning, and code words to exclude or include certain people must be confronted. Human Rights Commission of the City and Commonwealth of Los Angeles has an extensive series of workshops to bring different communities together and help them move beyond the discomfort. Los Angeles learned that because it had failed to proactively address the changes that were occurring, it endured many terrible problems that might have been avoided, such as riots and other civil discord in the sixties and early nineties.

Ultimately what is the reward? Eventually, the outcome will include intermarriages, integration of neighborhoods, rapid growth of middle class groups and millionaires, and economic prosperity and social stability. Los Angeles has the largest number of Koreans, Mexican, Armenians, and Persians millionaires in the United States who give back to the community. Learn from Los Angeles, California, New York, Miami, Hawaii, to Chicago, areas that are working hard to address demographic changes. Montgomery County can be a leader for all of Maryland in demonstrating adjustments to demographic changes.

The Census Bureau made clear that we should expect another dramatic change in American society: changes in the replacement rates of birth. It takes 2.1 children per child-bearing woman to insure that a population remains stable. Declining populations are being seen in Japan (1.4), South Korea (1.1), Russia (2.0), China (1.8), and the rate in all of Europe falls well below 2.1. Overall, the United States rate is 2.1: White 1.6; African Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders are at 2.4. The only group in the US that is well above the 2.1 is Latinos at 2.4 to 2.8.

Education of the public is critical, especially for those who are opposed to immigrant minorities. Among other reasons, minorities are critical to our ability to sustain tax revenue to support Social Security and Medicare.

Dr. Torres-Gil has worked with groups like AARP to reach out to White, conservative retirees to acknowledge an understanding of their discomfort, and to encourage them to help invest in young Hispanic minority immigrants—the future workforce of this country. They will be the base for our future economic productivity.

If Montgomery County is becoming heavy with minority youth, then show the way by investing in those populations; this ensures that years from now Montgomery County will have a population base that ensures that taxes will continue to flow for public benefits and services. If you do not invest in these diverse populations when they are young, then older, aging, baby boomers will find that the United States does not have a work force or tax base to sustain their benefits. If you want to see where this scenario can lead, visit Japan and South Korea. They are particularly adverse to immigration and foreign workers. They try to create policies enticing women to have children, but we see that this does not work. Japan and Korea will be forced to accept diversity if they have any hope of sustaining their economy.

Dr. Torres-Gil commended the County and the Commission for having the foresight, the vision, and the good sense to know what the future is and to begin to adjust to the demographic change.

## **Questions/Answers**

**Q:** Given the budget problems on Capitol Hill, how do you work this on the National level and what happens if we fail to do so?

**A:** Things will get worse before they get better. There is a great polarization in Congress and throughout the country about what we want from government and ourselves. The National debt is unsustainable. We have to find a way to deal with this and reduce spending. Programs most in jeopardy will be Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability insurance, and veterans' pension systems.

Right now the public and the Debt Commission are stymied. One side says no taxes and the other side says no reduction to public benefits. That dilemma has to play itself out. Regardless of which party controls the Senate and House, and regardless the outcome of the Debt Commission, there must be a grand bargain about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The County and State have to prepare for a decline or revamping down of these Federal programs and dollars. However, in time the pendulum will swing back. Our support lies with the 75 million baby boomers 65 years of age or older are an incredible electoral force in government.

**Q:** What are the local best practices in terms of investing in people without documentation?

**A:** In the 1990's Los Angeles realized that the school districts were made up primarily of minority students. Schools were over crowded. The city needed voters support to build new schools. How did they get political support to build new schools when the minority population has low voters registrations? The answer was to help maintain home values. This ensured that the city could build up the unified school district and educate the young immigrants and minorities—the future homeowners for the area. This is one example of thinking out of the box.

**Q:** What about health benefits for immigrants that do not have documentation?

**A:** That becomes more difficult now because of immigrant backlash. The *Affordable Care Act* restricts health care to anyone who doesn't have documentation. The Los Angeles County Health Department is creating stand-alone health clinics that do not receive the *Affordable Care Act* funds. They receive other funds from the county or the state so they are not held hostage to the Federal level. Immigrants pay cash for urgent care services.

**Q:** How can we attach a new value to senior citizens?

**A:** By the rebranding our seniors. There are only two groups that will have a net growth: seniors and Hispanics. Older persons are now facing unemployment. There is a myth that older persons are not as useful as younger workers or do not have the skills or cannot pick up new technology. Wrong! All studies show that employers most value work ethics, discipline, and dependability. No group possesses these values more than older adults. We need to rebrand the value of older persons in this society by profiling role models of older adults with these values. Seniors can learn new skills quickly.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

The September 22 minutes were not presented due to the need for additional revisions.

## **COA REPORTS**

Issues of Note:

- Morton Davis received an award for outstanding services to the Muslim community.
- Jack Sprague is a role model who has made a huge difference for seniors through his work with legislators in Annapolis.

- Last month Grace Whipple represented the Commission and delivered a testimony before the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Judy Welles represented the Commission and testified before the Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Development.
- Elaine Binder presented a testimony before the County Council Health and Human Services Committee.
- Based on recommendations from the Housing Summer Study, a Housing Task Force was created to review the policies for senior housing in Montgomery County. It will be co-chaired by Jack Sprague and Grace Whipple.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Communications and Community Outreach Committee (CCO) – Spencer Schron and Judy Welles**

At the next meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>, discussions will cover diversity outreach, review the stakeholders list, and the communication plan for the Senior Agenda. The Committee is working to define stakeholders and expand the list to incorporate new groups relevant to the Commission's work. It is important that Commissioners who are in contact with outside groups identify themselves as COA members, explain what the COA does, and listen to their issues relating to seniors.

### **Health & Wellness Committee – Tammy Duell**

Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) legislation, which was expected to have become active on October 1, 2011, has been postponed. Proposed regulations were issued on September 23 for 30 days of public comment in the Maryland Register. The new implementation date will be April 1, 2012.

In regard to "End-of-Life," Elaine Binder sent a letter on the behalf of the Commission for the Advance Directive Registry asking for funding to support the Advance Directive Registry to the State.

Officer Scott Davis from Montgomery County Police Department will be a guest speaker at the H&W meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>. He will talk about cognitive and mental health training that the police department is receiving to improve interventions with older adults.

### **Public Policy Committee (PPC) – Jack Sprague**

The agenda for the Legislative Breakfast was distributed. The purpose of the breakfast is to thank the legislators for their hard work, listen to what they tell us they are doing in relation to senior issues, and inform them about the Commission's three-to-four most pressing concerns. The PPC will review talking points for the November 30<sup>th</sup> Legislative Breakfast at the next COA meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Dr. John J. Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Services,**

Dr. Kenney commended the Commission on their two valuable Summer Studies, which he believes will influence Aging and Disabilities Services and other County agencies. However, enormous budgetary challenges exist.

For FY13, there will be a 10% initial target budget reduction for every County department. This could mean \$17 million to Health and Human Services. The Department is working on developing various

scenarios of lower reductions of 1%, 3%, 5%, and up to 10% reduction to achieve the goal reduction if necessary. This is a painful process; testimonies are very helpful in terms of providing advocates for all seniors in general and for safety net programs for those near the poverty level.

Aging and Disabilities was established in this Department 17 years ago. Forming partnerships of stakeholders, advocates, and consumers with a unified voice leads to more effective advocacy. You see this effect when the Commission on People with Disabilities and Commission on Aging unify to testify on personal care, home aide services, transportation, adult protection services, community case management, a wide range of issues, and now an increase of unemployment senior issue.

The Senior Sub-Cabinet is coming together to discuss what it can accomplish with diminishing resources and increasing workload in light of the broad umbrella of issues that it covers. A meeting has been set to discuss the Senior Agenda and how it fits in with the overall scope of the Sub-Cabinet and the Summer Studies.

#### **Dr. Odile Saddi, Director, Area Agencies on Aging**

The Washington Area Regional Grant Holders are helping organize meeting, speakers, decide to focus on Publication Outreach for the regional Area Agencies on Aging.

Based on new Census information, for FY13, the State of Maryland is increasing funding from \$620,000 to \$920,000 for senior care, financial assistance for adult daycare, etc. We will be hiring new case management staff.

The State of Maryland forecasts a \$1 billion deficit for 2013. Federal support of the Senior Aide Program operated by Jewish Council on the Aging (JCA) has seen a 5% budget reduction. JCA has had to reduce the number of hours for their senior programs as a result.

On May 12, 2012, there will be a regional Senior Expo that includes Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia.

### **LIAISONS REPORTS**

#### **Ethnic Affairs -- Pat Lesnick**

The Committee of Ethnic Affairs had a major role in the Montgomery Festival, which was well attended. The Vital Living Committee had placed the *Navigators* at all the libraries in the County. In the coming year a few more resources will be added to the *Navigator*.

#### **Commission on People with Disabilities (CPD) – Seth Morgan**

The Commission on People with Disabilities welcomed on new members recently; a CPD planning retreat will be scheduled soon. Based on comments at the last meeting, the CPD is on a parallel track with the Commission on Aging. Its major issues concerns are transportation and Metro access; parking; employment, and living accommodations for people with disabilities.

#### **Montgomery County Libraries – Mildred Nance**

A group of eight people meets in the libraries to study issues relevant to services we can provide for seniors. This group tries to decide type of activities most beneficial to seniors. Over the last few years, the Library Department has lost 70 or more staff. We are trying to figure out how to serve the public with these constraints. We collect statistics to help prioritize needs and programs.

**Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRC) – Phil Smakula**

Everyone is trying hard to avoid budget cuts to senior-related programs. The Scotland Community Center in the Potomac area has closed and is slated to be demolished and rebuilt. People will be redirected to Potomac Community Center and local community churches. The White Oak Community Center is scheduled to meet its completion date of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

**Office of Community Partnerships – Austin Heyman**

The Vital Living Committee had a meeting with JCA about employment to identify issues to be addressed in terms of the aging workforce. The JCA runs the annual Employment Expo, with AARP's active involvement. Austin Heyman is working on a draft paper highlighting the benefits of older adults in the workforce.

**OTHER**

**Marcia Pruzan**

A few years ago, the Commission helped the National Institute on Aging (NIA) update its Exercise *Guide*. Last year, NIA received funding to develop a national web-based campaign, **Go4Life®**, encouraging exercise and physical activity in people age 50+: [www.nia.nih.gov/go4life](http://www.nia.nih.gov/go4life). The program was introduced on Capitol Hill in October. Marcia will bring program- related materials for distribution to the next COA meeting.

**Morton Davis**

Please notify Morton if anyone knows of any organizations that might be interested in his lectures on “Keeping Seniors Safe,” Morton has many connections with the Montgomery County Police Department if you need help and makes presentations before groups in churches, mosque, synagogues, and senior community centers.

Because of Thanksgiving, the next Commission meeting will be held a week ahead of the regular schedule, on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marcia Pruzan, Secretary